



Culture Counts – Response to the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee’s scrutiny of the Scottish Government’s culture budget for 2024-25.

Culture Counts is a network of over 70 arts, heritage and creative industries organisations. Our members are largely representative bodies, as well as some events and performing companies. We welcome the committee’s continued engagement on the issue of the future of funding for culture, which has never been more vital.

Our response builds upon our evidence and recommendations for the 23-24 inquiry ([Our evidence to the culture funding inquiry — Culture Counts](#)), as well as consulting with our Core Members and sector stakeholders for up to date evidence on the central issues (see appendix I), as well as consideration of relevant academic and industry research (see appendix II). We have received evidence from individual artists and organisations from museums and galleries, theatre, art, health care and access for disabled people, Local Authority and Local Authority Culture Trusts, libraries, playwrights, literature, music, voluntary arts, environmental, archives, skills and craft.

1. In our pre-budget report last year, the Committee described the operating environment of the culture sector as facing a “perfect storm” of long-term budget pressures, reduced income generation, and increased operating costs. How has this evolved over the last 12 months? What impact has the Budget for 2023-24 had on the culture sector?

Evidence and testimony from across the cultural sector are clear - at best, the position relative to 2023-24 has remained the same, but more often the position for organisations, cultural workers and artists has significantly worsened.

When considering the present culture sector landscape, it’s clear that factors outlined in the CEEAC Committee report last year remain live and urgent. The overall economic picture is extremely challenging. High inflation and rising interest rates are acutely impacting the culture sector. The impacts of Brexit are ongoing, and the sector is still in recovery from the pandemic with audience numbers in most areas still to reach pre-pandemic levels and now exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis. The effect of almost a decade of standstill investment in many parts of the Culture Portfolio is a deepening real terms cut. Recent [analysis by the Scottish Parliament’s Information Centre](#) demonstrates those trends.

Our evidence (Appendix 1) and others’ submission from across the culture sector will provide the sobering examples of the current position; the venue closures; the reduced cultural services; the losses and toll on the workforce and freelancers; and the precarity across the whole sector as income generation is exhausted and financial reserves are depleted. The sector remains in crisis with some predicting they may not be here in 24-25 and the post pandemic will to ‘build back better’ mostly forgotten.

The recommendations in the Committee's report last year were disappointingly not reflected in the Scottish Government's initial draft budget for 23-24, which most concerningly contained a proposed 10% cut to Creative Scotland (CS), with further cuts or standstill funding for other areas of the culture portfolio. The cut to Creative Scotland went against all evidence provided and was a moment of regression rather than progress. Reversing this cut was hugely welcomed, however it only came about after a significant and hard-fought campaigning from the culture sector and public. In the year since, the real terms value of investment in many parts of the culture sector continues to fall.

Scotland's cultural sector is world-class. However, spending on culture has not been a budget priority for the Scottish Government or Local Government in recent years. Last year, the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture (CEAC) portfolio was 0.58% of total Government spending ([Scottish Budget: 2023-24 \(www.gov.scot\)](#)). This was one of the lowest areas of Government investment (surpassed only by spending on the Deputy First Minister, Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal).

Spending remains miles from the recommendation in the [2019 CEEAC report, Putting Artists in the Picture](#), that culture should establish a baseline target for culture funding above 1% of the Scottish Government's overall budget, on a cross-portfolio basis. This remains the goal and would see a budget of £597mil (based on the 23/24 budget) providing an additional £250mil.

Within the CEAC portfolio, sustained investment in critical parts of Scotland's core cultural infrastructure have not been prioritised. Since 2015-2016, the majority of Creative Scotland's 120 Regular Funded Organisations have received standstill funding, meaning approximately 31% ([Bank of England Inflation Calculator](#)) of the value of the Government's investment in these organisations has disappeared.

Looking at Creative Scotland's income more widely, ignoring the very welcomed emergency covid funding, the total grant funding for Creative Scotland in 2021-22 was about 10% lower in real terms than in 2014-15. This is despite the Scottish Government providing additional money for Screen Scotland since 2018-19. Therefore, the real terms cuts to the areas of Creative Scotland since 2014-15, that are not screen related, are substantially more than 10% ([Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing](#)).

Artists, makers, and creatives are the heart of the sector and need to be paid fairly for all that they do and produce. The main source of Scotland's funding for individual artists stems from National Lottery income distributed by Creative Scotland. CS received £34.4m from the National Lottery in 2015-16, falling to £31.5m in 2022-23. ([Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing](#)). This is a real terms reduction of 30% in the value of support available to individual artists and one-off projects by cultural organisations. ([Bank of England Inflation Calculator](#)) Given the Scottish Government's commitment to individual artists and freelance practitioners, there is an inadequacy of the funding levels available to individual artists.

Short-term and annualised funding settlements are not conducive to forward planning, organisational and staff security and achieving long-term change. It puts the sector under significant pressure and creates an unproductive environment of uncertainty and competition when we should be encouraging strategic and sustainable planning and collaboration. The

late confirmation of budget levels compounds the challenges of forward planning and programming. Implementing Multi-year funding would enable long-term planning and is key to future proofing. Doing so will fulfil the Scottish Government manifesto commitment of delivering three-year funding settlements, which has yet to be delivered. Fast and responsive investment being made available for initiatives such as the Culture Collective was welcome and has been hugely successful, however the legacy of such investment initiatives needs to be considered at the outset as the long-term benefits are under threat with funding due to end and no continuation available.

Outwith the Creative Scotland ecosystem, the picture is no better. Funding for Scotland's National Performing Companies has remained flat in cash terms since 2016-17. This represents a real terms cut of over 20% in the past ten years ([Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing](#)). Six of Scotland's leading independent producing theatres have recently published a stark [report](#) outlining immediate risks to their sustainability. At a community level, 1mil Scots participate in local creative groups but these need the infrastructure of support organisations, without which would see a loss of opportunities to participate and increased social isolation. ([Creative Lives](#))

Where the picture is most bleak is in Local Authorities, where since 2015-16, the real terms value of investment in Libraries, Museums, Galleries, and other cultural heritage has fallen by nearly 40% ([Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing](#)). The majority of cultural facilities are free at the point of delivery (which must be protected), and therefore have limited opportunity to secure additional income to mitigate additional costs. Over half of Community Leisure UK members have reported that their services will be unsustainable within two years without further intervention or significantly restructuring service delivery. It is important to recognise any funding into public culture as an investment, supporting the health and wellbeing of communities, and not a cost.

Despite efforts to develop investment through philanthropy and business sponsorship cuts of 33% were made to the Culture & Business Fund Scotland in 2022 and maintained for 2023/24. In a time where funding is decreasing, sponsorship provides an alternative and vital revenue stream and the C&BS Fund can act as a key incentive tool to achieve sponsorship. Reductions to the scheme do not help to develop the philanthropic business sector that we need.

The sector has welcomed the Scottish Government support and collaboration with the UK Government to secure cultural tax breaks including Exhibition Tax Relief, Theatre Tax Relief, Orchestra Relief, energy bills relief scheme, etc. This has provided a lifeline for many organisations without which their financial situation would be much bleaker. We would urge the Scottish Government to work to maintain these commitments and collaborate further with the UK Government on future investment opportunities, however, these alone, are not enough to rebalance the gap in investment that the sector has experienced or provide the sustainability the sector needs.

2. Our report also concluded that this crisis provides an opportunity to accelerate innovative solutions to the budgetary pressures within the sector. What progress has been made on this in the last 12 months? And at a time of limited resources,

what other innovative approaches could the Scottish Government take forward to support the culture sector.

The Creative Industries contribute more than £5 billion to the Scottish economy every year. They comprise of over 15,000 businesses employing more 70,000 people and make a vital contribution to the national wealth and international reputation. Despite this there has been a lack of progress in the development of existing and new forms of cultural investment and businesses and jobs are now at stake. Culture Counts has seen little progress against the recommendations outlined in the CEEAC Committee's report, or in the Government's own commitments. While past recommendations made by the Committee and Culture Counts ([12 recommendations for culture funding — Culture Counts](#)) remain relevant, they no longer go far enough. To secure the future of Scotland's cultural sector, urgent and transformative action is needed.

The culture sector is inherently innovative and creative across all that it does including in diversifying its income, which is why it has survived in recent years. It has, however exhausted cost cutting initiatives and innovative schemes for diversifying income at an organisational level. Fundraising is increasingly challenging with funders experiencing increased demand, many are moving to support different priorities and success rates are plummeting. The sector reports that it is at capacity without significantly compromising its core services and mission. Further change and adaptation is of course possible, but additional budgets and interventions are urgently needed at a government level.

Increased Investment

Scotland's spend on culture as a percentage of GDP is still one of the lowest in Europe lying 28th out of the 34 nations ([Statistics | Eurostat \(europa.eu\)](#) 2021 and [Country and regional analysis: 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)). If Scotland aspires to set an international example as a progressive nation and lead the way in its cultural investment, then the current budget levels need to significantly improve to realise this and meet the ambitions proposed within the cultural strategies.

Creative Scotland has recently [announced the demand for its new multi-year funding programme](#) is £113m annually from 500 organisations. The RFO network (predecessor to the multi-year funding programme) had a budget of £32.7mil in 2023-24 ([Creative Scotland Annual Plan 23-24](#)) This provides a clear indication of the scale of ambition, the impacts of rising costs and need that exists across Scotland's culture and creative sector. However, this picture is from only one strand of Creative Scotland's funding portfolio and does not reflect the need from their other programmes or from the rest of the sector outwith Creative Scotland's remit.

- **Budget increase:** Culture Counts is recommending an increase to the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Portfolio budget for 24-25 at **30%** of the 23-24 budget
 - The value of a 30% uplift would be **£104mil**
 - Based on the 2023-24 Budget, the portfolio would represent **0.76%** of total Scottish Government spending.
 - The proposed uplift would represent an increase of **0.16%** of total Scottish Government spending

This investment would go a long way to securing the future of Scotland's world leading cultural sector, and position us to deliver shared strategic priorities, but increased investment alone is not enough. In addition to the above we are recommending the following actions be taken, to ensure that this approach is protected in the longer-term:

- **Establishing a baseline:** the 24-25 Culture funding level is recognised as a baseline level of investment.
- **NPF indicator:** Government investment in Culture is included as an indicator in the National Performance Framework. In future years:
 - investment falling below the 24-25 baseline is recognised as performance worsening.
 - the 24-25 level + inflation is performance maintaining.
 - additional investment is performance improving.
- **Multi-year funding settlements:** Using the newly established baseline outlined above, that the Scottish Government fulfils its manifesto commitment of delivering three-year funding settlements to the culture sector.
- **Future investment decisions** should be taken in a way which prioritises the long-term health of the culture sector.

Government investment is only one part of Scotland's cultural ecosystem. It is also essential that the **Scottish Government works with COSLA and Local Government**, building on the newly established Verity Agreement to mitigate and reverse the hollowing out of Local Authority cultural services, which have sustained a 39% real-terms cut since 2015-16. ([Scottish Parliament Information Centre Briefing](#), [Bank of England Inflation Calculator](#)).

3. The Committee called for the forthcoming refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan to provide a clear and strategic sense of how the Scottish Government is working to ensure a more sustainable future for the sector. How should the refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan help to inform future budgetary decisions within the culture sector?

At the time of this consultation, a refreshed Cultural Strategy Action Plan has not yet been published which makes identifying ways it can inform future budgetary decisions difficult. The sector would welcome an Action Plan which puts audiences and artists at its centre and provides a forward-looking long term strategic approach to cultural activity, leadership, delivery and funding and integrates thinking from the strategic cultural work under development including the International Culture Strategy. We would additionally urgently call for a Strategy for the Creative Industries and for clarity on where leadership on the creative economy currently lies. As things stand, strategic ambitions do not match with need and the resource available and there is a real risk that the sector will be too lean to change and respond to the refreshed Action Plan without significant investment.

A strategic approach to Cross Policy Working is urgently needed with identified leadership that understands the intrinsic value of culture of and in itself and that cultural participation has wider benefits that support our wellbeing and builds wealth in our communities. Cross-portfolio working is implemented most successfully from the ground up. Across the culture

sector there are multiple examples of collaborative models with the public and third sectors to deliver activity which supports early intervention and prevention which consequently reduce demand of higher tariff public community, social care and health services. Investment, a strategic approach and commitment across Government departments is now required to work towards transferring public investment through procurement and collaborative solutions to deliver change at a transformative level. Some work has already begun to map out where arts, heritage and creative industries can deliver on outcomes across Justice; Social Security; Health; Education and Economy. Further work is required to identify ways to secure cross-portfolio investment and understanding of the benefits of culture, particularly with the increased demand for social prescribing and creative therapies to support mental health and well-being. Initiatives such as the introduction of a % for culture scheme from all Scottish Government infrastructure projects could further this approach. This scheme was an SNP manifesto commitment and should be realised as a matter of urgency.

Transparent and inclusive strategies, processes and cross-party commitments are vital to the sector's development but without a shift in investment the sector will continue to decline. An increased budget must be passed on to those who have been on standstill funding or have not received support over the last decade to make up for the real terms loss and to provide security and sustainability to achieve the ambitions and to meet the requirements in the areas of carbon reduction and moving to net zero, fair work and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

The lack of available money to invest in the sector argument made by Government prevents meaningful engagement and discussion. The barriers to providing appropriate investment and a multi-year settlement are unclear given that the culture budget has represented such a low percentage of the overall budget, the risks to committing for at least three years are relatively low compared to the benefits this would deliver.

Furthermore, significant changes to the Fiscal Framework were agreed last month, which doubled Scotland's borrowing capability (to £600mil), removed the withdrawal limit from the Scotland Reserve and ensures that borrowing and reserve limits will now grow with inflation. These changes allow the Scottish Government significantly greater flexibility in accommodating the budgetary need and addressing barriers to delivering the multi-year funding settlement manifesto commitment.

The recently released Government Expenditure and Review (GERS) figures were described by the Wellbeing Economy Secretary Neil Gray, as demonstrating that "Scotland's finances are improving at a faster rate than the UK as a whole, with revenue driven by Scotland's progressive approach to income tax and our vibrant energy sector." ([BBC News](#)) The figures estimated Scottish public sector revenue at £85.7bn and total spending for the benefit of Scotland at £106.6bn.

In the context of these figures, the amount needed to provide much-needed stability and secure the future of the culture sector is tiny. In 2023-24, the overall value of the Scottish Government's budget was £59.8bn ([Scottish Government Budget 23-24](#)). The 30% uplift in investment that the sector so desperately needs, would represent Scottish Government directing 0.16% more of their overall spending to Culture.

By taking decisive action on culture change and investment, Scottish Government would halt the decline and go some way towards securing Scotland's place as a cultural world leader and unlock enormous benefits for Scotland's society and economy.

Appendix 1 – Survey Responses:

To inform Culture Counts' response to the Scottish Parliament Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Committee enquiry: *Budget Scrutiny 2024-25: Funding for Culture*, we asked our Core Members and wider culture sector stakeholders for views and information on a number of central issues.

Those views were provided via an online survey, which ran from 28 July to 15 August.

Extracts of information submitted are quoted throughout the body of our response.

Responses are provided in full here, in order to provide the Committee further understanding of the realities facing those working in Scotland's Culture Sector.

Respondents:

The below respondents kindly gave us permission to attribute the information they provided.

Throughout, these are identified by the initials in the left column.

| ID | Name | Position | Organisation |
|---------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| BB-DCA | Beth Bate | Director | Dundee Contemporary Arts |
| ML-SBT | Marc Lambert | CEO | Scottish Book Trust |
| PA-SSP | Peter Arnott | Co-chair | Scottish Society of Playwrights |
| AMM-CoE | Amy McNeese-Mechan | Councillor | City of Edinburgh |
| GH-SADA | Graeme Howell | Chief Executive | Shetland Arts Development Agency |
| AO-DW | Andrew Ormston | Director | Drew Wylie |
| SL-CET | Suzanne Lofthus | Artistic Director | Cutting Edge Theatre |
| JB-A | Jan-Bert van den Berg | Director | Artlink |
| PT-SLIC | Pamela Tulloch | CEO | Scottish Libraries Information Council |
| DM-CL | David McDonald | Policy and Partnerships Coordinator | Creative Lives |
| LM-SSP | Linda McLaughlin | Co-Chair | Scottish Society of Playwrights |
| JP-SA | John Pelan | Director | Scottish Archives |
| KM-YTAS | Kenny McGlashan | Director | Youth Theatre Arts Scotland |
| JK-LAS | Jenny Kumar | Projects & Communications Manager | Literature Alliance Scotland |

We gave the option for respondents to respond anonymously, owing to the commercial or otherwise sensitivity of some of the information we have asked for. We heard from culture

and leisure trusts, organisations both in receipt and not receiving core funding, sector support organisations and freelance artists and practitioners in a variety of culture sector positions. A summary of those responses have been included with any identifying information removed.

Furthermore, we are grateful to the core members and stakeholders who gave us advance sight of their own responses to this consultation and those who engaged in round table discussions on the Culture Counts Response. While those views are not reflected in writing here, they have been received by the committee, and have been integral to the production of this response.

1. In our pre-budget report last year, the Committee described the operating environment of the culture sector as facing a “perfect storm” of long-term budget pressures, reduced income generation, and increased operating costs. How has this evolved over the last 12 months? What impact has the Budget for 2023-24 had on the culture sector?

Under Q1 of the committee’s call for views, we asked culture sector stakeholders the following questions:

- How have the last 12 months been? What are the challenges facing your organisation/ those you represent? Are long term budget pressures, reduced income generation and increased operating costs impacting you/your organisation or stakeholders?
- Are ongoing pressures and uncertainties having an impact on the culture workforce, for your organisation/those you represent/or the sector more widely including freelancers? This could be in terms of staff retention, health and wellbeing, confidence and resilience.
- Are these challenges impacting on other sources of income generation, such as external funding, sponsorship, partnership working and audience development?
- Is your organisation/those you represent experiencing a gap between available budgets and needs, how are reserves levels? Can you tell us more?

BB-DCA: The last 12 months has been a year of extremes. We have delivered the most incredible creative programmes, combining ever-increasing audience figures, strong national press, deep community engagement and valuable partnerships at both a local and international levels. This is set against the backdrop of previously unimaginable financial precarity: long-term budget pressures, particularly properly remunerating an historically poorly staff and making one-off cost of living payments to help those in extreme hardship; reduced income compared to pre-Covid levels due to a slowness to return, the impact of the cost of living crisis, cuts from the local authority and increased pressure on trusts and foundations; and increased costs right the way across the organisation, including

insurances, transport for work, fees for freelancers and consultants, consumables, food, travel...

We are able to deliver this year's work successfully as we could use the emergency reserves we have built up over Covid. These run out at the end of this financial year and we will have to rely on the last of our free reserves, the three months running costs it is recommended charities retain, in order to fund ourselves.

We are so prudent. We have made efficiencies everywhere across the organisation, including restructuring teams, losing hours and posts, restricting hours, delivering work with external partners, investing in fundraising to bring in more fundraised income than we ever have, and setting high and hard income generating targets.

But we are now at the point where we are stripped back enough. Any more cuts will fundamentally change the organisation and the impact we have in Dundee, Scotland and internationally. This is what it costs to run our organisation, and we simply do not have enough money.

It is hard to describe the exhaustion and frustration that these working conditions induce in the workforce. Staff retention, health and wellbeing (particularly mental health), confidence and resilience are all affected, particularly as we start to see other organisations struggle and fold, and talented staff leave the sector. We do so much with so little compared to other sectors, but this requires support for our entrepreneurial approaches, our naturally innovative outlooks, and our collaborative work. Instead, it feels as if we are being wrung dry.

We are finding external funding (i.e. trusts and foundations, non core) very challenging, as the demand for their moneys has increased so much. Around 1 in 10 of our current applications is successful; this used to be around 1 in 5. We have brought on new corporate supporters but the amounts they are able to give (£5-10k) are nothing like the amounts that used to be discussed (£15k+).

Although the slow return to pre-Covid audience levels impacts hugely upon our financial outlook, even if we were at those level of earned income again, we couldn't meet our costs, as they have spiralled so hugely. We need increased public investment in everything that we do."

We are currently facing a £300k deficit next year. This includes having made all of the efficiencies and cuts noted above. We hold £450k in reserves.

An organisation with a turnover of our size (£2.2m pa) should hold three months running costs back, approximately £500k.

If we use these reserves to meet our running costs (and we have no option if we want to keep our doors open and staff employed), then we will be left with £90k in the bank - enough for 3 weeks, not 3 months.

ML-SBT: Challenges faced are summarised in reports such as CS' RFO Survey Rising Costs. The LAS survey for the committee, and the recently LAS published survey on

freelancers in our sector, demonstrate the considerable strain produced by real term decline in arts and culture funding. Equally this is impacting on writers, further reducing income, restricting opportunities both to get published and to meet their audiences.

See LAS survey of freelancers recently published. It does not make for comfortable reading.

At a Local Authority level, the erosion of cultural services and workers continues, making the vital work of partnership in delivering services even more challenging.

Arts organisations have had to be resilient over a long period of time, and have generally managed this situation admirably. But we are now at a point where ongoing reductions in funding over time have left organisations intensely vulnerable. Many Boards will have to consider whether they can legitimately sign off accounts as going concerns.

The decline of arts funding has led to increased competitive pressure on other forms of funding, be it from corporates or Trusts. It is often suggested that private sector contributions can make up for the decline of the core arts budget for Scotland, but this is optimistic at best.

A great deal of effort has gone into fundraising at SBT, in order to make up the gap between available budgets and what is needed to run universal national programmes. These programme budgets have been eroded considerably over time and have resulted in a reduction on what it is possible to offer by way of services.

Reserve levels at SBT are just about on target, but this is unusual.

PA-SSP: Playwrights are freelancers whose employment (in the form of a commission) is typically based on live events scheduled to happen 18 months to three years in the future. Hence, in uncertain times across the theatre sector, the commissioning of a new play is a strategically challenging option for employers. Nonetheless, it seems to be something that theatres very much still want to do. The downside is that they are finding it harder to look into a crystal ball with anything approaching certainty or confidence.

Only a very small number of playwrights make anything approaching a living purely from writing plays. We are shedding talent to teaching and television in equal measures. To write for Scottish Theatre is becoming a less and less sensible way of using one's time...especially as venues are now demanding, due to the pressure on them, a greater and greater "polish" to written projects. What is increasingly a full-time job is becoming less and less possible to sustain unless there is another considerable source of income available to individuals. Hence, the social profile of freelance playwriting is becoming more and more restricted.

Playwrights can be employed to do many kinds of work when based in colleges and universities, local authorities, or with specific venues or sets of companies. This hardly ever happens. Residencies of this kind are scarce and getting scarcer. This is a waste of talent as well as an undermining of the sustainability of the work itself.

This is as much a question of how the public money is spent as much as it is of how much is spent. We are working to a charitable organization model of provision that we inherited from

the foundation of the Arts Councils in 1946 (rather in the manner of the NHS inheriting hospitals from existing charities in the same period) and this model may simply be worn out. Both in terms of employment and delivery, the theatre sector is in urgent need of a holistic overhaul. The "settlement" of the mid-noughties, dividing Creative Scotland from directly Government Funded "National" bodies can increasingly be seen as the re-arranging of deckchairs on the Titanic...when it promised to be a properly thought-through regional/national place and rights-based strategy for provision and participation.

AMM-CoE: Budget pressures are being felt everywhere, but there's need for a special recognition of the challenges faced by our invaluable cultural ecosystem.

I'm deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of staff due to the pressures they are facing.

I would imagine so - locating sources of funding and producing viable grant applications takes time, and dedicated resources.

I believe reserve levels are now the lowest they've been for some years.

GH-SADA: Our main challenges are reduced income, Increased costs and core funding that was agreed in 2017 for a three year period.

The impact on my organisation will be redundancies, reduced activity and increased stress and well-being issues for the leadership team.

Yes, the extended time that we have been working under increased pressure is absolutely taking a toll on the health of me and the workforce.

A range of external funding sources we used to be able to access have completely pivoted to cost of living / poverty focus.

Audiences are less inclined to take risks with limited leisure spend so audience development is challenging.

We are reducing staff numbers and activity to ensure that we remain viable, we had just dug ourselves out of a negative reserves issue after a challenging capital project.

AO-DW: The combination of Brexit and the pandemic has reduced the amount of international cultural consulting I do. It has also impacted on my expert work with the European Commission. As a Board member of cultural organisations it has been important to focus on ensuring the business models and operating platforms are fit for purpose in a poorer UK. The challenge of not pricing out low income audience is more significant.

There was a staff recruitment challenge when the labour shortage first took hold, but this has reduced. There have been changes in staff attitudes to work, largely arising from the pandemic, but these are not fully understood as yet.

Preparing for reduced income from all sources (public funding, trading, philanthropy, and audience spend) will be a fact of life for a while. Doing this without undermining the key mission of an organisation is the major challenge.

Reserve levels are fine. Support for the sector in the pandemic was very good. Reduced income requires us to focus on what is most important and whether our business plans are optimised.

SL-CET: We were very fortunate to secure a substantial Grant from Scottish Power Foundation of £86k which enabled us to test out some new theatre work with disabled people in Edinburgh. Sadly, that was only funding for one year, so we are back to square one - trying to scabble around and find funding for the projects we established last year and struggling to raise the finance. So I would say that the last 12 months has been really positive in that we have been able to establish some new projects working with disabled people but it has also been really hard in that we cannot now find the finance to keep those projects going. Fortunately, we don't have premises so no overheads. All our staff are part time freelancers so that means currently there is only myself and a part time fundraising working for the company, instead of the usual 8 part time freelancers. We can't pay them when there are no projects going as we are not core funded.

Yes, we may have to stop some of the new drama sessions and projects that we started last year.

We have taken a risk that we will be able to bring back all of our freelancers. We have already lost one to other work.

There is more pressure on myself as Artistic Director as I have had to spend the Summer applying for funding instead of having creative development and planning time. This has been quite wearing mentally.

We work very hard to raise all our funding through Trusts and Grant funders in order to be able to deliver our drama projects for free to disabled people in Edinburgh and Fife.

We find it very difficult to find sponsorship and simply don't have the time to find Sponsors.

We have managed to retain our reserves which is kept to be able to pay any freelance staff in the event of us having to wind down the company or pay them in the event of another covid outbreak where they couldn't work.

There is definitely a large gap between our budgets and needs but we are waiting to hear about possible funding from Creative Scotland and other funders and will be applying for Multi-Year funding from CS.

JB-A: Conditions continue to be very tough. Increased costs and chronic standstill funding erodes the capacity of cultural organisations such as Artlink to address the exponentially growing needs of people with complex disabilities and those with long term support needs. They themselves are experiencing extremely tough living conditions because of significantly

increased costs of essentials (i.e., heat, light, food) and rapidly reducing care and social support as public services shrink because of Scottish Government budget reductions.

The current financial settlement is having a devastating effect on community, social and healthcare provision, with most systems now at breaking point (e.g., waiting list are unacceptably long, social care provision is being more severely rationed, community facilities are closing or faced with closure). All are now under such great pressure that the variety and quality of opportunities for participation and meaningful involvement in the cultural life of our communities by disabled people is fast disappearing.

In addition, the continued erosion of local government support for the arts culture is marked, and the move to transfer responsibility of cultural assets to alternative community led models (e.g., Falkirk, West Lothian) are often hastily arranged and unrealistic in its intentions and financial modelling. This environment does not only undermine opportunities for disabled people to participate it also significantly lessens the possibility for them to build skills and become economically active within the sector.

Opportunities for longer term freelance work are significantly reducing as the gap between recommended fees and standstill budgets widens. The pressure on freelancers is therefore increasing as uncertainty over future dependable income streams comes under further pressure. This type of working environment has inevitable consequences on the confidence and resilience of artists and subsequently will have an effect on their emotional wellbeing as uncertainty increases.

They are not as yet. As stated demand is increasing and in terms of cross sector investment their are (short term) investments being made. The main concern is the short term nature of these investments. To effect significant change in communities you cannot invest for one or two year and expect long term change to happen. At best this type of input can alleviate current pressures at worst it raise expectations which are then squashed. Short termism is also something is used as a way of not taking action. Annual budgets and difficult decision become shorthand for in-action and risk averseness. This is no way to run public institutions never mid a country.

There is a growing gap between available resources and needs. This is now an endemic problem within health, social care, education and communities, with available services being rationed or only accessible to those with the appropriate financial resources. So although individual financial positions may be ok at the moment the trend is definitely downwards and if no clear action is taken, then inevitably we are looking at a further erosion of cultural involvement and opportunity. It would appear that efforts to make sure that the cultural sector could survive the pandemic were made in vain.

PT-SLIC: For SLIC, a flat budget has been received from the Scottish Government which while good and gratefully received has been significantly eroded by inflation.

For SLIC members libraries, it is a similar position - best case flat budget, worst case reduced budgets which have had to cope with raised inflation and staff pay rises so in effect a huge budget squeeze which has impacted on service delivery.

Certainly, within the library sector, recruiting staff across the country has remained a challenge. Existing staff are having to cover for vacancies which can affect health and wellbeing. A wealth of experience is being lost to the sector as people leave either through retirement or through frustration with the ever increasing budgets pressures within which they are expected to work.

Income generation opportunities are limited within libraries. However, the ability to deliver added value/grant funded projects has been much reduced.

SLIC does meet its reserve policies.

SLIC cannot comment in detail about the position its members find themselves in.

DM-CL: We support the community and volunteer led creative sector in Scotland, groups who give up their time to peruse their creative passions. However there remains barriers and systemic inequalities that can prevent people from realising their full creative potential. This includes limited access to and unaffordability of public venues due to the ongoing impact of closures due to the Covid pandemic and inflationary cost pressures. The groups we work with are volunteer-led and largely self-sustaining and not dependent on funding but that they need enabling conditions. The things that might prevent a group from flourishing are more social and practical factors such as, a lack of reliable affordable transport, which has a disproportionate impact on older people and lone women. It can mean that people cannot get out as regularly as their group meets.

We work with volunteers and our data suggests that people are volunteering more time than ever before and are generally feeling optimistic about the future of voluntary creative activity, our Big Conversation survey in 2022 highlight that optimism among volunteers is at the highest level since 2017.

30% of Scotland's volunteers are supporting organisation in their own community, that's 370,000 people providing supporting and building local resilience and often filling in gaps in provision as a result of cut backs in support and funding at the most local level.

Yes, what funding is available to smaller local groups is becoming increase scarce and harder to access. Community led groups need simplified access to small pots of funding that help enable local creativity.

LM-SSP: The Challenges experienced by playwrights over the last year include the hangover from Covid, during which no full-length commissions were issued.

There were already difficulties in the sector due to reduced funding, but once the pandemic restrictions were eased, venues began to produce again, but those productions mostly consisted of the revival of commissions which had been abandoned during Covid, rather than fully newly-commissioned work. In addition, some companies had ceased operating altogether.

Reduced funding at producing venues leads to fewer commissions and produced productions, which in turn means less opportunity for freelance playwrights.

The impact of drawn out changes to multiyear funding and previous rounds of cuts continues to result in fewer commissions and productions.

Funding opportunities and residencies are predominantly targeted at 'emerging' writers, and there is not enough trickle-down support for mid-career and established writers. This stagnation and frustration is resulting in an increasing incidence of people abandoning the industry altogether (Source: Playwrights' Studio Scotland/SSP Playwrights' Survey 20/21)

Resilience is weakening in the sector. Mental health impact is more frequently discussed across the sector, and much more openly than in the past. People are exhausted. Lack of opportunity, lack of accessibility, and lack of transparency are continuing factors wearing freelancers down.

More people are reporting difficulty/delay being paid. Increase in 'in kind' support is a veiled increase in unpaid work."

Yes, in terms of lack of hope: people do not have the energy or the motivation to pursue external sources of funding when their main funding support is reduced to almost invisibility.

A reduction in the overall size of the cake only leads to everyone fighting over the few crumbs. The sector is becoming one of the worst paid overall, and while there aren't enough fully paid jobs to go around, the resulting participation is likely less than living or minimum wage when hours are factored in on some projects.

There is currently no check undertaken on whether commissioning funds are actually used for that purpose by core-funded organisations, rather than for fire-fighting/building costs/etc, or that the productions that are produced do actually fulfil the requirements to pay people in Fair Work terms. It's therefore very difficult for individual freelancers to ensure that they are accessing the few slices of cake that remain.

JP-SA: Most archive service do not get their funding direct from Scottish Government. However, the trickle-down effect of budget squeezes and cost-of-living increases impacts them strongly. Lack of investment means a significant drop in the quality of preservation, storage and access to collections.

Public sector wage increases without increase in operating budgets affects ability to operate effectively. Any funding for archives has to be done externally with little or no SG support, unlike museums, galleries and libraries.

Yes, ongoing pressures make it difficult to offer permanent positions which makes recruitment difficult. Also, due to a housing crisis, particularly in the availability of rental properties/affordable housing, services are struggling to recruit as potentially qualified and interested applicants are unable to relocate to take up employment.

Yes, because there is little time and too few staff to pursue any of these resources. Archives offer unlimited potential for engagement and creative activity but this takes time and resources to develop.

Most archive services are part of cultural/leisure trusts, such as Glasgow Life, or universities, so have little control of overall budgets or responsibility for reserves levels.

Archive services are generally underfunded and struggling. The Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis have exacerbated these problems

KM-YTAS: The last 12 months have been ok for us predominantly due to any sustained funding and emergency funding in recent years. This allowed us to restart pre-pandemic activity whilst also carrying forward some of the learning and developments from the last few unique years.

However we are concerned about the short to medium term with reduced earned income and donations, whilst grant funding has become significantly more challenging.

A recent sector review survey we carried out with youth theatre groups and leaders we support all across Scotland highlighted the following priorities:

47% said their main concern was funding and organisational sustainability.

26% said their main concern was the impact of cost of living increases on their operations and the families they support.

31% said their priority was still post-covid recovery and building engagement numbers.

Not currently for YTAS but 15% of our sector review responders highlighted that staffing issues was their main concern.

Staffing issues at a youth arts / local level will have a long term impact on cultural audiences and participation.

We are investing built up reserves at the moment to pilot development activity. We hope we will be able to sustain these improvements and support services into the years ahead, if we can secure ongoing and additional core and project funding. However this is looking incredibly challenging across the sector.

JK- LAS The background of a decline in funding, which includes standstill funding, over the last decade of at least 25 percent has left many organisations vulnerable and cut to the bone.

This brings with it huge uncertainty of what sector funding will look like post 2024 particularly in terms of core funding from Creative Scotland but also of other vital sources such as Local Authorities. This year-on-year funding creates unsustainable organisations unable to plan more than 12 months ahead, and with an increased level of funding administration placed on already overworked members of staff and the need to dip into reserves to get to 2025.

Simultaneously, running costs for activity, staff and energy are the highest they have ever been.

There is also uncertainty around returning audiences given the post-pandemic changes to events, impacting on expected income. And increasing costs also mean that fewer individual events are being held. Meanwhile, increased budget pressures have meant less flexibility in planning and projects.

Brexit has caused huge problems with EU subscriptions and book sales for our publishing-related members.

The majority of our members have seen a 1-10% budget cuts or loss of income, with slightly fewer seeing a loss of 11%-20%. A number of members are experiencing larger budget cuts/ income losses of 31%-40% and 41%-50%.

There have been no decreases to buildings or operational costs, but one respondent reported no change due to being on a fixed rent; however, most noted a 1%-10% or 11%-20% increase. Two other respondents cited higher increases of 21%-30% and 31%-40%.

The impact of budget pressures, reduced income and increased running costs are clearly unsustainable for the long term. It is affecting how members run their services in various ways, such as shortening print runs and increasing prices, consciously doing less activity this year, closing the office one day a week to save on costs and having to regularly update budgets as rates have increased quickly. Importantly, a number of members have noted the need to eat into their reserves to make up the shortfall. (see Q4 for more info on this).

Staff retention is a challenge in terms of ensuring funding is in place to run the current level of activity and staffing and having to retain staff on fixed term contracts, which passes on uncertainty to the workforce. Beyond 2024/25 there is no certainty that these contracts can be renewed or that core programmes will be sustainable.

Our members have had to restructure their budgets and programmes and have not been able to maintain pre-pandemic staffing levels. This has led to a decrease in staff morale since they have to shoulder more workload. Many organisations have seen staff burnout at all levels with the risk to health and wellbeing of working under pressure. Conversely, some organisations have given staff the opportunity to think more innovatively to make things possible.

There is a need to build in succession planning and address accessibility and inclusion but members have found that gaining especially younger Trustees and Branch committee members has been difficult as they cannot take on volunteer work when paid work is needed.

Some members have found it difficult to compete on salaries during this high inflationary environment, seeing some staff members this year move into other sectors driven by more attractive salaries and benefit packages.

The culture sector relies on the freelance workforce to deliver our programmes but there is a huge talent drain coming, evidenced by our [Freelance Report](#) which found that 1 in 5

freelancers were considering leaving the literature and languages sector altogether due to low rates of pay. This is reflected across the arts.

Our members' national services are being delivered against a background of considerable cuts in Local Authority arts and education spending, and a lack of European funding. In the face of cut funding, most members were forced to reduce their outreach and accept audience loss. This included work with mental health services. A small number of respondents were able to mitigate the circumstances with low cost events and taking events online.

None of our members report being at risk of closure at this current time. When asked about the status of reserves, the majority reported they have more than 6 months with others' reserves expected to last 3 to 6 months and some have only 1-3 months of reserves. Some members don't have any reserves due to funding and or business models.

Anonymous Responses:

Our financial position after this year is highly insecure. The funding items mentioned above are both one-off with no commitment to future disbursements.

In summary, REMOVED is facing existential financial challenges from April 2024.

REMOVED is in the same situation, needing to divert staff resource to fundraising and to develop strategic plans amidst the uncertainties around both our own existence and the landscape of the sector

Applying for funding feels harder. We have had more knockbacks in the last 12 months than usual. We have increased our fees which is meaning we need to raise additional money or do less.

People are over worked and under resourced. This has knock on effects for everyone. E.g. a venue manager over capacity not able to confirm a booking, stressing out the booker and the artists that will be involved in the show. The precarity goes the whole way down the chain.

We have no meaningful reserves. We are working out ways to build them but giving the way we are funded this is difficult. The only real pot of reserves we have is due to covid recovery funding.

The fact that members based and artists serving organisations were inclined (but not always enabled) to pass on the recent 12.5% cost of living, and energy cost increases was indicative and eye-opening. With most of us on the research and production side living hand to fist, the fact that our institutions had so little resilience that the only way to solve a cash flow problem was to raise the money off the backs of those of us that could least afford it, was indicative.

Most organisations are flying with one wing as it is, under reduced staff and recently threatened cuts to arts, archives, museum and culture in Glasgow. At this point the ice that supports us as creative producers and consumers is melting.

Meanwhile we live in incredibly challenging times and the response of arts and culture in Scotland to the challenges to life as we know it, are lost behind traditional art forms, methods, and technologies as well as a significant investment of time and money in carbon counting. For a cogent critique of the latter point go here.

<https://scvo.scot/p/49564/2022/03/23/mission-critical-how-third-sector-organisations-can-play-to-their-strengths-in-responding-to-the-climate-emergency>

Creative Scotland seems to have created a space of inequity in its funding mechanisms for individual artists. Project are transparently assessed then sent to the final committee for review where both the committee and the final decision-making process remains opaque.

Furthermore the % approval ratings, or potential for success is not part of the discourse. Some of this is due to economic constraint a fair amount of it is simply bad or at best uneven practices.

In every instance, in every bid we seek match funding. When our primary funding goes bust, we have to cover the costs out of our savings. When we inform our partners that our match funding failed, there is the real impact on projects, but there is also a sense that there are viable partner and those that are working within challenging circumstances.

End of the day when the money fails, the creative process gets squeezed and all that stuff on the perimeter such as partnership working and audience development, as well as, documentation, assessment and monitoring of the effort take a second, third and fourth seat behind the need to secure the creative output in the first place.

The organizations I have been working with are either at no or very little reserve over the past five years. We are at the edge of the plateau and gravity takes over from this point forward.

Very challenging. Raw materials are getting very expensive, people have less spare cash to spend. Bigger projects are few and far between. I have also had difficulty in getting invoices paid by big companies that owe me.

There seems very little money being spent on the applied arts. Its also difficult to ask for a proper daily rate, sometimes practical workshops are being run by unqualified or voluntary people and boxes ticked, regardless of the standard of experience. This can be very disheartening.

External funding can be very hard to find.

Most organisations, artists/makers that I know are surviving, hand to mouth. Many individuals are part of a domestic partnership and their wage is secondary, very few are raising a family on Their wage.

We are still dealing with the results of Brexit and the pandemic both of these issues have created long term budget pressures and uncertainty.

Yes, we are unable to offer opportunities to freelancers due to reduced programming funds. The uncertainty around longer term planning is definitely causing stress and anxiety for staff.

Yes we are noticing that traditional funders for the arts are changing their priorities and wanting to allocate funds to increasing social welfare concerns.

Last 12 months extremely challenging, we have been fortunate to get underpinning financial support REMOVED in order to progress with a deficit budget in the run up to and during this financial year.

It is clear that services cannot continue to be delivered in their current form despite rising need particularly from more vulnerable groups and individuals, especially in relation to library services or opportunity to access services through libraries, but more generally as well.

Our income generating opportunities through trading have been hard hit and will break even at best REMOVED and box office is significantly down on pre covid levels and customer behaviour is incredibly difficult to predict post covid.

Yes - morale is an issue where peoples' expectations of flexibility in relation to work post pandemic do not always match business need. Equally there is evidence of burnout at all levels, and particularly at management levels, and financial pressures mean that staffing levels are overly lean also causing pressure for individual staff members, and we are conscious of the impact on health and wellbeing and trying to manage that as well as possible despite pressures.

Staff retention is higher than pre pandemic but before then it was almost non existent, the greatest pressure is in fact on recruitment where for most jobs there is a real lack of applicants and certainly of quality applicants suited to the job. This is despite a good portion of our services only operating at around 85% of pre pandemic levels in order to manage these issues as well as we can.

There is an impact on customers in doing that of course and on access to services. We need to be looking to the future and service transformation given ongoing pressures, but this is hard to do when there is reduced capacity at all levels within the business, including at managerial level.

Yes - we are cautious on when and what we programme which is impacting the level of risk that we might take in relation to programming - music and comedy seem to be the surest bets in theatre terms. Trading has fallen off a cliff, and any external funding we are able to access although we do that well, is purely project based, and not relating to core operations or helping to improve our bottom line and financial sustainability.

Sponsorship is difficult to get given all businesses are facing significant pressures and this area is one that many have cut back on. Staffing resources make new partnership working and sustaining existing relationships more difficult as well.

We have never managed to build any reserves at all and our projected worst case scenario deficit budget position for this financial year is REMOVED, we have set a starting deficit budget with our board through necessity, REMOVED, ensuring that we are deemed a going concern for audit purposes.

Cutting services is not the answer but scaling them back is inevitable and/or closures of facilities which seems the wrong thing to do now particularly where these are based within communities at a time when peoples' social and general mobility is restricted and cost of living pressures are real and the services we deliver such as free public access PC's is increasingly important.

Increasingly working with partners to ensure that we look at different ways of delivering services working together and not duplicating efforts or facilities is the way forward, but even then services going back to very basic and core is inevitable given the scale of the pressures faced and lack of income generating opportunities.

The last 12 months have shown massive development impact; demand in our support and enabling services has increased and interest in the development of our working organisational model has increased. It has been a very successful period for building new relationships, attracting project funding and developing partnerships - but securing core funding is ironically an ongoing challenge.

Uncertainty does impact the workforce and largely made up of freelance staff, we remain aware that staff are more likely to leave their contracts to higher paid work in this economic climate. Without core stability it is harder to retain excellent staff, however much they really would want to stay with the organisation.

As core funding is so difficult obtain, we continually operate to maximum capacity with a small core team - and most of whom are part-time. We do not yet have reserves - we have never been in a position to grow reserves as a young charitable organisation. Project funding available is incredibly limited in its level and scope to produce high quality work and to offer fair pay.

The last 12 months have been among the hardest I have ever experienced in 30 years of working in the arts. The impact of significant inflation at a time when we are in the 7th year of standstill funding has been considerable and - like all small organisations - our options are limited (if not actually non-existent) as to how we can continue to operate, both in terms of programme (serving artists and audiences) and core functionality of the company. This is exacerbated by the fact that we are persistently on short-term funding cycle, which inhibits any medium-/ long term planning and commitments, which in turn limits options.

We have seen the loss of lots of people from the culture sector, moving into other work, as opportunities have reduced. All the public programming organisations reducing their outputs (e.g. from 5 exhibitions a year to 2 or 3) mean there is less work for all freelancers, such as

designers, technicians, photographers and so on. This makes it harder to secure key, experienced personal on which we are reliant to realise high quality projects and events. All funding sources are extremely competitive and there is very little history of private philanthropy for contemporary art in Scotland.

Possible partner organisations and those we have worked with in the past are similarly stretched, reducing commitments and outputs and unable to develop partnerships where we have such short (1 year) funding timescales. We are drawing on reserves to sustain us.

We have had to reduce the scale of our activities this year, partly to allow the organisation time to recover from the impact of the pandemic, but mainly to balance the budget in the face of soaring costs and the ever-increasing need of our members for support with fees.

Going forward we do not believe a reduced programme to be a viable or sustainable option. In fact, our recent comprehensive strategic review made it clear that a wide range of stakeholders believe that we need to increase our accessibility and geographic reach while maintaining and even growing our artistic ambitions.

To fulfil our strategic objectives, and to align with industry ambitions to promote Scotland as a nation with outstanding music education and a vibrant performing arts culture, we therefore plan to grow our engagement around Scotland.

We know that this engagement is needed and wanted and has innumerable positive outcomes for young people. By committing to this work in the face of reduced public funding and the increasingly competitive nature of accessing other funding streams for our core artistic activities, we face substantial deficits over the coming years.

There is increasing pressure on salaries which we struggle to meet. Recruitment over the past 18 months has been a challenge- it has been difficult to find the right people, we have encountered high rates of churn, and we are losing skilled staff to better-paid sectors.

We don't have recent data on staff wellbeing, but I can state for myself that the uncertainty we are living through is impacting my own resilience and that the resulting anxiety is not sustainable long term. Recent press reports about theatre artistic directors resigning, after short periods in post, resonate.

Staff turnover has been impacting on all these areas.

Yes. Currently (before any additional funding is secured, and in the context that we do not know what - if any - core funding we will receive from 2025, we anticipate an annual gap in the region of REMOVED for the foreseeable future. We are about to sell the building we own in order to top up reserves after several difficult years.

This will afford us a bit of time to work towards break even point, but is clearly not sustainable for very long.

2. Our report also concluded that this crisis provides an opportunity to accelerate innovative solutions to the budgetary pressures within the sector. What progress has been made on this in the last 12 months? And at a time of limited resources, what other innovative approaches could the Scottish Government take forward to support the culture sector.

Under Q2 of the committee's call for views, we asked culture sector stakeholders the following questions:

- In the event that future Government funding were to be cut or remain at standstill, what would the impact be for your organisation/those you represent?
- Please describe how budget uncertainties are impacting confidence and ability to plan ahead?
- How are requirements to advance fair work, equalities and sustainability impacting budgets and work programs now and in future?
- If continued standstill or reductions in Government investment in culture were to take place, what would be the impact on the sector as a whole?
- Do you have any reflections on how Scottish Government and its agencies create and disseminate policy and make budgetary decisions for the sector?
- Recent years have seen much conversation between the sector and policy makers regarding cross portfolio working. What do policy makers need to do to take this work forward?

BB-DCA: We would have to close our doors. The only way to meet at £300k deficit would be to stop our exhibitions programme, our children's film festival, and all our learning and engagement projects, to save on staffing and delivery costs. This would then take us so far from our charitable aims, and the function for which we are funded, we could not operate.

It is short-termism and stunting in the extreme, to have to work not knowing whether your successful, popular, efficiently run organisation might not have a future. We know and can evidence the value of our work and yet we are chipped away at from all angles. Planning ahead is impossible when you don't know if your organisation will even exist in two years.

We have made a firm commitment to fair work and fair pay, but it is impossible to see how we can meet this financial requirements when our future is under threat. We have programmes across the organisation that support equalities work and specific funding to target projects that focus on anti-racism, disability justice and supporting those from lower-socio economic backgrounds. Again, when our limited funds are needed just to keep our doors open and core activity running, it becomes very difficult to see how these programmes can continue to be prioritised.

Environmental sustainability is of particular concern as the greenest options for our work (travel, energy, procurement) are rarely the most cost efficient, so require investment from the organisation. How can this be prioritised when there is no cash spare?

The impact on the sector would be huge and devastating. Well known, popular, successful organisations, from the large-scale to the smaller, would disappear, along with jobs, talent, and all of the incredible social, financial and cultural impact they delivery. Those that remain would see an exodus of staff as people have to move to other sectors in order to be paid properly, replaced by those from more singular, unrepresentative backgrounds, who do not need to rely on fair pay. Funding from other trusts and foundations would also become precarious as they want to support public investment not replace it wholesale. Scotland would be a changed place.

The lack of clarity and communication from SG around its budget making decisions is startling. The impact of the 10% cut, then reinstated as an uplift, was shameful.

A better understanding of the good work that is already happening in the sector, with best practice and case studies from those with long-term and impactful partnerships in health, education and housing etc.

ML-SBT: We would inevitably have to make some staff redundant, and make some very difficult choices as to which SBT programmes we can legitimately carry forward. There is simply no wriggle room left.

Operating conditions for the arts remain very uncertain. Creative Scotland's new funding structures will offer 3 to 5 year funding agreements to arts organisations successful in the process. But Creative Scotland's grant-in-aid from government is awarded on an annual basis. Equally, a potentially radical process of sector reorganisation has been embarked upon, while the Cultural Strategy still has to be published.

Some degree of certainty and predictability is necessary in order to manage and develop cultural businesses. We do not have that.

All important and worthy, but add operating and programme costs at the worst possible time.

Creative Scotland warn that while they currently support 120 RFOs, this may drop to 60 in the 2024/6 period, unless the Scottish Government reviews how it supports the arts. A 50 percent reduction in this cultural capacity would not represent a successful strategic outcome.

It is to be hoped that the Culture Strategy reaffirms Creative Scotland as the funding and development NDPB for Arts and Culture. It is not clear why the SG took on the business of a Cultural Strategy when it has an NDPB for that; nor is it clear why the recommendations of The National Partnership for Culture, set up by the SG to advise the SG, were largely rebutted. After 3 years we are still waiting for a cultural policy of any kind.

There is a considerable distance between rhetoric on the importance of the arts, socially, economically, and culturally, and the policy and budget stasis we find ourselves in.

Goodness knows. Whatever was meant to be happening on this front does not appear to be happening at all.

PA-SSP: Catastrophic. For the reasons outlined above, because our employment is provisional upon forward planning, we are the canaries in the coal mine. Our employment is the first to be discarded. There is no need to fire us...we can simply not be hired...Were we embedded in theatres and communities, it might be a different story. This would serve audiences and participants as well as ourselves.

The situation for our members depends entirely on the status of those who employ them. For example, if project funding is involved, are negotiated union rates of fair pay being respected? Can this be effectively monitored by the funders? If organisations are fixed-term funding applicants, what status is awarded to projects that are in development when positive or negative decisions are made? A good many of our members are employed by Glasgow Lunchtime Theatre (for example) whose status vis a vis Creative Scotland policies on Fair Work are, to put it mildly, ambiguous. Whose rights are to be respected by the funders more? Those of seat of the pants, only just serving producers, or the workers whose jobs with them involve making "concessions" to their precarity?

The question for funders is basically a simple one. If they are to guarantee decent standards for employees, particularly freelancers, then the nettle of governance of arts producers has to be grasped. Are they actually willing to grasp it? Once you introduce objective standards of employment into the sector, you become directly responsible for the delivery of those standards and practices. Are you?

It would demand a wholesale revision of how participation in the arts as a human right is to be delivered. The models we use now are highly inefficient of both talent and administration. Government, local and national, would need to take a hard look at the whole sector and its own attitude towards that sector. If you want a country with professional artists supporting the participation of your population in artistic activity...you need to pay for it...and you need to organise it. The "hands-off" version of charitable boards etc running failing individual institutions is unsustainable. But government needs to recognise the challenge and meet it. The alternative is slow death...starting with the freelancers, who are already keeling over because the air is getting harder and harder to breathe.

If the arts are a public good, then we need a professional arts sector at the core of activity. That sector can be intelligently supported to deliver its costs back to society many, many times over. The economic and cultural importance of the arts has been demonstrated conclusively many, many times. But the assumptions underlying how it is delivered, and through what structures of ownership, commercial and otherwise, are stuck in the past and spiralling further and further beyond management. Grasp the nettle. Stop hiding behind the great and the good. The "arms length" principle is bust. The people who make the arts are highly committed and highly efficient for the most part. Government should take the round of fixed-term funding from 24/25 as itself a re-dedication to arts participation as a public good. And look to this period as being the time when we design a new model of that participation...based on place and well-being...for 2030 and beyond.

AMM-CoE: I'm worried that much of the outreach and community engagement work will be lost entirely.

For recipients of grants, it's very challenging in terms of staff hiring and programme planning.

Obviously they cost more to deliver but it's the right thing to do.

We risk losing the 'conveyor belt' of new talent coming forward, and people giving up on the arts as a viable way to build a career.

Much greater enhancement of Scottish government and local government working together

GH-SADA: We would need to significantly redesign our service and offer. Government funding currently only makes up 10% of our turnover we may decide to pursue other opportunities and give the funding back.

There is a lot of uncertainty, we know our funding is insufficient for us to survive until April 2025 when the possibility of new funding from Creative Scotland exists. All our planning is focussed on ensuring we are viable at that point and that we secure increased investment.

Fair work, equalities and sustainability are all key agenda items for us as an organisation, how ever they mean that there will be increased costs and without increased funding we will reduce activity.

It would probably need a complete redesign (which it needs anyway).

Creative Scotland should be looking a for number of cultural enabling organisations to be funded through one route and to be responsible for ensuring there is an adequate level of cultural provision in its area.

There should then be a separate process for content producing organisations to work in partnership with the enabling orgs.

Obviously an organisation can be both and could apply through both routes.

Not really other than to encourage as much transparency as possible.

Value the impact that arts and culture can have on well being. Use evaluation models that are effective, inexpensive and capture the change that has been made.

AO-DW: Focus on mission, what is most important, and recasting business plans and operating platforms to deliver this.

The governmental annual budget settlement process will always be a problem for organisations that need to make long term plans and commitments. However, in my case there is not really a problem for the next three years.

A priority for the organisations I work for or represent so already integrated into forward plans. Some recasting of the sector as organisations adapt, or fail to adapt. It will be important to tie public investment to access and affordability to avoid a two tier sector. Placing a statutory cultural provision requirement on local authorities would help avoid a worsening post code lottery of cultural provision.

Reflections:

- A statutory cultural provision requirement for local authorities.
- Tie public funding to some access and affordability requirements as well as a clear framework of values.
- Stimulate (underwrite) involvement in Creative Europe programmes.
- Don't use culture funding for tourism investment.
- A new body to support freelancers (based on Scandinavian approaches).
- Peer involvement in funding decisions by agencies.

If you mean working with other sectors (health, education, tourism etc) then make this a genuine approach with cross-sectoral priorities, plans and indicative spend prepared and agreed at top level by the various sectors so organisations can then collaborate to respond to them.

If you mean working across cultural sub-sectors (heritage, arts, CI etc) incentivise this and encourage the lottery funders to collaborate and take a strategic approach.

SL-CET: We would have to stop all the new initiatives that we have built over the past two years which are groundbreaking. We are working to ensure that learning/disabled people of all ages have equal access to the performing arts as audience members, participants and professionals - currently they don't have that access or any perceived pathway to the performing arts.

So all the work that we have been creating would have to stop. We would then have to re-imagine the company or fold after 28 years of working.

We have a 10 year plan in place but it's very hard to plan one year to the next because we are not core funded. We can only do what we have money in to do so that makes it almost impossible to plan.

Those aspects are central to our work and embedded in what we do, so not having a huge budgetary impact. It does mean more work for our Artistic Director as we don't have a person who could take those aspects of work away from her.

Devastation. We would lose some very important companies but also stop any new and much needed companies who are just starting out and who are essential to ensuring that we, as a sector, keep changing and responding to the world in new and exciting ways. Don't just talk about it or pay lip service, but actually drive it forward to action. I've had many conversations over the years which have been positive but nothing practical ever comes from those conversations.

JB-A: The effect on those we involve and support would be devastating. We believe that this is avoidable with some clear and decisive action. This would rely on better investing in and understanding the relational positive outcomes of cultural involvement in the health and wellbeing of our communities.

We have been conditioned to work in an uncertain financial environment over the last 15 years (if not longer). We believe that it is important to first recognise the devastating effects on people's lives and for us to be inventive in how we overcome barriers in the short and longer term. Budget uncertainties and short term investment is not helpful at best and counterproductive at worst. It is important that greater certainty is created, which is possible with the right commitment. Longer term financial commitments are regularly made by public organisations through procurement routes. There is no reason why these type of commitments could not also be made through other investment mechanisms.

To implement some of this work properly further resources are needed. This sector as many others are at breaking point. Decisive action is needed to stabilise and imaginatively work with what we have.

The reductive attitudes that are prevalent, where difficult decisions and increased competition are the main focus are unhelpful. A more imaginative, better informed and collaborative way of working is needed to maximise the opportunities that exist.

Have a better informed practical understanding of what they are talking about and a greater insight into the relational benefits of investing in culture.

PT-SLIC: For SLIC, the continuation of a flat budget will mean a reduced headcount at some point and a reduction in the range of deliverables.

For SLIC members, this will ultimately mean a reduced service to library users.

Budget uncertainties are making it difficult for SLIC to plan projects with a longer time horizon. Partly due to SLIC's own capacity but also the ability of the library sector to engage as they don't know what future service provision may look like.

SLIC is committed to delivering Fair Work First. So far, SLIC has not experienced any significant budget implications with this to date.

There would be a much diminished library offer, literacy rates would drop, health and wellbeing would be affected, attainment would drop, the digital divide would increase, social isolation would take place and in general economic wellbeing would suffer.

Bring together a cross sector group to look at the big themes - health and wellbeing, economic wellbeing, climate emergency etc and then identify paths which bring a holistic solution - culture, specialisms, community etc Where possible co-designed at a local level.

DM-CL: Volunteering is never free it relies on an infrastructure of support from bodies like Creative Lives and local TSI's to provide support for volunteering, applying

for funding, development work, capacity building etc. Over 1 million Scots are involved in local creative groups, we believe that it is vital for Scotland's wellbeing that funding for locally led community based creative activity is protected, further reductions in support would see less opportunity for people to participate culturally in their own communities and would have a knock on impact of increasing social isolation.

Create an equal space for culture in local decision making forums such as community planning structures. Explore local models of good practice where culture is already central to the deliver of other service areas such as a health and wellbeing or economic growth.

LM-SSP: We would expect more people to exit the industry or increase 'steady' day jobs to subsidise playwriting work: the sector, the culture, and the country will be much the poorer for this. If the Scottish Government genuinely believes that 'Culture is a powerful tool for building bridges between people and reinforcing mutual understanding.' as it stated in its Cultural Strategy (2020) and Global Cultural Framework (2022) <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-global-affairs-framework/>, then it needs to fund it properly.

The reduction in commissions / full productions is seen as evidence of reduced risk taking due to budget uncertainty on the part of producers, and leads to a lack of confidence in freelancers that work will actually be commissioned. It's very difficult to invest the emotional and physical energy in writing in the vain hope that someone will pick something up.

Recent surveys reveal that audience numbers are in fact buoyant in the commercial theatre sector, and subsidised shows do still sell out. We must translate that demand into bolder risk taking, into a willingness to invest in the arts." SSP is committed to Fair Work, Equalities and Sustainability in its work, and expects the organisations which work with its members to take them into account in all their activity. If that increases costs, then that's the price of fair and equitable work for all. Devastating. Empty words from the Scottish Government about the importance of Culture don't stop people leaving the industry if they can't earn enough to support themselves and their families. If there are no playwrights writing, there are no plays: if there are no plays, there are no theatres. Is that what we want?

There's a lack of reporting on 'cultural return on investment' from the arts. There are occasional reports on what the arts do for the wider economy, but it's never tied back to the paltry sums invested in comparison. here is plenty of comment in the media:

Joyce MacMillan (Scotsman) recently said on twitter that £5M-ish would solve all the problems of the Big 6 venues without resorting to cuts or impacting on the sector.

<https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/companion-pieces/Theatre.pdf>

In this document, Creative Scotland says: Theatre contributes significantly to the cultural economy of Scotland, providing employment and attracting tourists to globally recognised events such as the Edinburgh Festivals. There is a growing interest in creating larger-scale work which has the potential to tour across borders."

<https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/23215290.arts-scotland-hidden-economic-driver/>

The Herald estimated the 'arts' at large contributed £5Bn to the Scottish economy. Would be an interesting exercise to drill into that figure and work out what the return is from theatre—but beyond the financial, there's the cultural, political and intellectual discourse that theatre stimulates.

The general feeling is that the Scottish Government doesn't in fact have confidence in the sector because it does not invest properly in it. If it does, then it needs to say it more clearly and, more importantly, back that up with hard cash."

JP-SA: Without investment in Scotland's archives, the sector will continue to struggle to achieve its potential. Museums, galleries and libraries can apply for funding to Museums Galleries Scotland and Scottish Library Information Council, funded by SG.. Archive services, badly underfunded, are missing out.

The sector will stagnate. Opportunities to grow the economy, improve wellbeing, support Scotland's creative and cultural sector will be missed. If there is one thing that the pandemic and its lockdowns taught us, it is that cultural and creative activity keeps us sane and able to cope.

A commitment to an evidence-based approach to demonstrating how cultural and creative activity improves mental and physical wellbeing, supports tourism, encourages social cohesion, addresses loneliness, grows the economy and represents incredible value for money.

KM-YTAS: Increased risk leading very soon onto job losses, cancelled events and services both for YTAS and our hundreds of members around the country.

This would quickly lead to a barren landscape of youth arts provision across the country, which is already impacting many areas and the most disadvantaged young people. We support these developments wholeheartedly but they require significant additional time, capacity and resource to make meaningful progress. They should be the rationale for significantly increased investment, not a requirement for existing levels of investment. "It would eventually lead on to a threadbare industry which would both earn and innovate less.

Whilst I believe that volunteer community arts groups would continue beyond the impact that cuts or continued standstill investment would have, it is clear that their work would become increasingly riskier for organisations, leaders and participants alike. I also think their activity would become increasingly unequal and inaccessible across the population, with incremental back steps across many of the Government's sustainable development objectives.

There seems to be a disconnect between awareness / consultation and the capacity to make any different decisions. I question how much more needs to be learned.

JK- LAS

Members predicted wide-ranging cuts to activity and staffing hours at the least, and complete organisational collapse at the worst. They cited the pressure of slicing thin budgets thinner and the demoralising cuts to programming and staffing. Several members noted that

they would be forced to close areas of work completely, losing partners and community participation.

Inability to access multi-year funding for ongoing projects via Creative Scotland is also problematic, meaning that organisations cannot plan more than 12 months ahead, existing hand-to-mouth without security for staff.

Most respondents cited increased costs for events and reduced capacity due to these requirements and associated paperwork. Several respondents noted that costs associated with fair work will continue to rise while funding is reduced.

See responses to question 5 - It would be a disaster: a hugely diminished sector, with a number of national organisations on the brink of collapse, if not already gone to the wall, an exodus of staff and freelance workforce to other sectors in Scotland/the UK (outside culture) or out of work, even more artists on the breadline and the Scottish population in a health and wellbeing crisis unable to access culture.

The process is neither transparent nor coherent, as the cut to and then reinstatement of Creative Scotland's 2023/4 budget demonstrates.

Creative Scotland is now embarking on the biggest single change in arts and culture funding in Scotland for decades. They do so before the refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan has been published with no long-term or structured planning in place.

It is not clear why the Scottish Government embarked on the process of creating a culture strategy when Creative Scotland was set up as an NDPB for that purpose. Equally, it is not clear why the Scottish Government set up the National Partnership for Culture, only to rebut most of its recommendations. We have now been waiting three years for a finalised Culture Strategy, at a time of unprecedented uncertainty and strain.

Further, dissemination seems to be focused on large organisations when small and local organisations can be the hardest hit.

Policy makers should answer this question themselves. There does not appear to be a clear framework for cross portfolio working. In the absence of such we are not aware of any progress. However, this ought to be achievable through existing Scottish Government led funding initiatives, such as: National Care Service, Mental health Renewal and Recovery, Active Healthy Lives, Low Carbon, Innovation, Digital, Raising Attainment, Whole System Approach, Care Experienced Children, The Promise, Pupil Equity and Criminal Justice.

We do not want further power hoarding at the 'centre' of policy making and consider it vital to have cross portfolio working completed with both large and small orgs in the sector.

Anonymous Responses:

Fundraising from non-Scottish Government sources is hugely time-consuming and highly competitive, partly because most sources are not focused solely on Scotland and are often

limited in the amount any one organisation might be able to apply for. Brexit has closed the door to EU funds which could take applications for larger and multi-year amounts.

Sponsorship is increasingly problematical on ethical grounds. So the Scottish culture sector is now more dependent on Scottish Government funds. Less SG funding will directly reduce the number of culture organisations and the level of cultural activity across the country.

These three issues should be integral to the way the culture sector operates, embedded into organisations' planning and operational processes and their work programmes. For many creative practitioners a career in the arts is already precarious so there is an onus on the sector to implement best practice on fair work and equalities. And if all parts of society fail to respond adequately on climate change there will be even less funding for culture as it will have to be diverted to emergency relief efforts and longer-lasting impacts (e.g. health, infrastructure and housing, energy and food supplies).

Any arts funder should welcome applications that acknowledge the costs of operating to best practice standards and that budget for these as well as the costs of artistic production.

A large part of the sector has already been at standstill for at least seven years and the culture budget has already seen cuts. With further cuts or continuing standstill REMOVED foresees that Scotland's cultural sector would significantly reduce in terms of range, innovation, equality of access (for both audiences and workforce) and capacity to contribute to societal issues e.g. public engagement around climate change.

We would not be able to do the same amount of activity we have been doing in the past. Our costs have gone up but our income has not.

We are trying to plan international collaborations but without certainty it is hard to create meaningful collaborations especially when it is increasingly feeling like we are the underfunded cousin in comparison to our partners.

It would shrink or there would be huge mental health fallout as those involved try and keep up with the work they want to create.

So you have a cultural garden that has very little water, lots of seeds and nutrients.

Where do I find a report of England and Scotland arts funding over the last ten years in comparison to the Europe and the Americas? Make it available on every arts advocacy groups website.

Lets see, research and development money is very, very hard to come by. Development costs are iffy, even with multiple letters of reference and a production, output and exhibition plan. Then there is the fact that most of the exhibiting bodies in Scotland are on quarterly schedules of rotating work at best.

Try to get a curator out to look at work, as their schedules are cut, colleagues are laid off and their work loads escalate.

To get work done, artists rely on friends and colleagues that make concessions. While the funders insist on fully rationalised budgets. I am in the midst of a project where the project team are paid REMOVED. Having agreed all time and costs with them upfront before submitting the bid, payment is now made from savings. To sustain professional contacts and exhibition agreements (outlined in support letters submitted with the bid) we have produced the work anyway.

REMOVED This is simply not sustainable, but offers to present the new work keep coming in. We will square the costs somehow in one or two years.

The funders seem to think that equality, sustainability, transparent ethics and responsibility are things to be managed out of artists, rather than practiced.

Clear research that demonstrates trends over a decade.

Transparency and clarity of intention and method for all practice.

A long-term plan based on comparative targets in small European nations.

as an artist you need to plan at least a year ahead. finding and applying for funding is crucial. also knock backs are very hard on your confidence

I think most of these are getting covered, there are just not enough programs

I would not encourage your people to enter onto the field of art. The lack of art taught in schools is bad enough

The impact of reduced funds which this scenario offers either way would have a direct effect on our ability to programme and our ability to offer artists work.

We can't commit to developing plans as we don't have the funds to do so.

Stand still funding would definitely have an impact on the ability of the sector to grow and innovate. Without new funding there will be little opportunity to develop new projects and open up new avenues for the sector. This will result in loss of talent as well as attracting new and interesting creatives to work and live in Scotland. The sector would be less accessible and more elite. With no additional funding there will be a limit to production budgets and the quality and scale of artistic projects. Organisations will become narrow in their ambition and risk taking across the board, resulting in fewer opportunities for younger and emerging artists and art forms.

The Government should reflect on its culture policy. A lot of time, consultation and money was spent developing that perhaps they should look to it to help their decision making. There has been a lot of consultation which is good but also takes up valuable time and delays decisions.

a reduction of 22 FTE posts at frontline staffing level
REMOVED

That equates to a reduction in services delivered since COVID of 36.5%

It is so difficult for everyone to stay motivated and thinking innovatively and strategically facing challenges of this scale and knowing what that could translate into for the services we provide to our communities and for our staff.

Despite that we are continuing to focus on where successes have been made e.g. in Wigan, and to look at how we continue to contribute to key outcomes e.g. health and wellbeing and community wealth building.

We continue to keep a focus on EDI issues through a group chaired by the CEO to demonstrate the priority we give it and to make sure key issues are addressed. REMOVED we ensure we offer fair rates of pay to those we engage from local business or the creative sector.

Complete and utter devastation resulting in the inability, even if further resources were made available in future, to reinstate or revitalise the services and the capacity lost. Even over covid we have seen a move of talented people into 'safer' and better paid jobs with more security and better hours and working conditions - they are unlikely to come back and this is only going to become more of an issue.

Scottish Government and Creative Scotland in particular must learn to work together collaboratively at a strategic level and in relation to how resources are best used and strategic planning. There is a real sense that that relationship is not constructive which cannot be good given the challenges being faced.

We cannot continue to laud culture as a key strength of Scotland and make it the poor relation to everything else and we must learn to realign resources and put our money where our mouth is re preventative spend as opposed to just taking a reactive approach to ensuring health and education and social care are funded and then doling out the crumbs - those services are underpinned already and could be helped much more with a wider view of our sector and a wider recognition of what is already happening. New thinking is required, and more knowledge of the sector is needed within government, it is currently sorely lacking exacerbated by very little engagement at local level in the sector by Creative Scotland as the key creative agency.

How the government, and through what channels, the government distributes its funding is more important - to impact how resources can be maximised across the country. As an increasingly successful regional organisation we continue to be funded on a project to project basis without core funding secured which means leadership capacity is very limited in its confidence for the long term.

Demand creates greater need:

To address Fair Work fully (and rightly so) this should be reflected in budgets made available to cultural charitable organisations.

Organisational capacity to offer support to EDI growth and training around this also needs to be taken into account

Sustainability measures are vital, funding availability to secure the core leadership of organisations should also reflect this

Many organisations would close.

This would include cultural bodies set-up by national and regional agencies to empower people and places, with negative educational, social and economic impact.

Too many external agencies dictate to the sector - without seeming to understand the practice and outputs across each region and/or demographic need.

Assessment of submissions for funding, including small to very large scale budgets are being managed by people with limited national experience, without best practice transparency.

It is depressing to someone who has extensive leadership experience in Scotland- that policy makers fail to learn about and/or remember past cross-sector success. To look forward some lessons could be learnt looking backwards as well as positioning and repositioning models of practice.

It is unlikely we would be able to continue to operate in the event of further standstill funding.

They are devastating confidence and undermining ability to plan ahead.

The growing and multiplying demands on policy areas such as this are unsustainable for smaller organisations, however desirable, necessary or admirable their reasoned outcome.

It would be worse than decimated and opportunities for artists will dry up even further, diminishing opportunities of public engagement in the arts and significantly reducing the appeal of Scotland as a visitor destination. It will significantly reduce the quality of life for everyone in Scotland, curb ambitions and civic / national pride, and reduce chances of improving well-being and mental health.

There is far too much ask of small organisations to implement Government policy. There should be centrally funded and government managed roles to collate data where useful (on equalities, carbon and fair work) - and the use to which the data gathered is put should be made better known to those whose work generates it.

Create cultural co-ordinators to work between culture and local government. Make local government support for culture mandatory. Make inclusion of culture in all policies and strategies for economic and social development mandatory. Pursue the triple bottom-line in all public bodies.

Annual shortfall of >£100k to be met by other fundraising/reductions in activity/increases in REMOVED

Reducing activity and accessibility means less benefit for the young people of Scotland, for our future music industry, for our cultural life and wellbeing.

We are only able to plan ahead based on drawing on reserves, which is not financially sustainable for very long. Our confidence in our own ability to deliver quality and ambition in ways that are genuinely inclusive and equitable is being seriously tested, and the increasing sense of uncertainty is undermining organisational (and wider sector) health.

We are committed to advancing fair work, equalities and sustainability but increasingly struggle to make sustainable choices due to budget constraints.

Cultural activity will become increasingly the domain of those who can afford it. REMOVED has only just started to make progress in terms of diversifying its activities and people, but this will go into reverse.

It feels harder to think about the long-term future with any certainty. Usually we would look to three year programmes, including investment in some large scale activity such as an international exhibition. This seems unlikely in the current climate as we will not have reserves to support the risk entailed in this type of activity.

The different pressures on organisations in terms of demonstrating improvements in EDI, Net Zero and sustainability, and Fair Work will require investment in terms of programme spend, staff training and reporting/evaluation. This is important and necessary work but if funding is reduced or remains at standstill then other areas of work would have to be cut or reduced in scope.

There will be significant impacts on budgets as we will need to invest in new ways of working to ensure we can meet targets across these three areas and to understand new information and developments in a rapidly changing society; we will need to ensure we allow plenty of contingency in staffing, planning and budgeting, building in longer lead-in times and allowing time for responding to changes, or challenge, which may preclude us from expanding the programme if funding levels remain the same or fall. We will need to invest in new skills and training to enable staff teams to manage these.

These areas present significant uncertainty for everyone as old ways of working are being challenged and the environment is changing so quickly.

Fundamentally Fair Work is about being paid a decent wage for what you do - this is a systemic problem in the arts which would require significant investment." "The sector may shrink in terms of the number of professionals operating, as there will be fewer opportunities to fund creative practice and support employment or the piloting and development of projects and events.

Avoidance of risk will be a huge factor in committing to projects or activities – for funders, and organisations, and those employing freelancers – which will almost certainly impact on

equality and diversity of the workforce and audience and on research and development opportunities.

There would be fewer opportunities for support for individuals who drive a lot of development within the sector through their practice.

Reductions in investment would convey a feeling that there is a lack of understanding of the value of culture across society, or a lack of interest in culture and its value and impact. If creative work is not valued, or perceived to be not valued then there would likely be a talent drain from the sector as is and the arts would not be seen as a viable career route for future generations.

I feel there is a disparity between statements of support and the financial commitment made.

If the government could consider the longer-term view of the impact of arts and culture - looking forward to where we could be in ten or twenty years time, this would show ambition for Scotland as a small nation, to make a declaration on the international stage about its commitment to arts and culture, and its wider value to society. For a small increase in investment, Scotland could attract profile, serious research, investment and visitors. I think the priorities highlighted by government such as EDI, Fair Work, support for a wellbeing economy, focus on net zero and sustainability are all vital. These address systemic problems and the arts sector could do so much to further progress these aims if there was more connected communications across portfolios.

It needs to be easier for arts and culture organisations to meet with and have a voice at planning and policy discussions as if the arts is incorporated into these sectors, there could be significant and more equitable impact across the population than is possible at present. Arts organisations do incredible work across these sectors already, but a genuinely joined-up approach could make Scotland a world leader in effecting positive change for its people .

Investment needs to be ringfenced within different portfolios to be directed towards arts and culture.

There needs to be a plan for evaluation and reporting of arts-funded activity across portfolios so the benefits/impacts can be measured.

3. The Committee called for the forthcoming refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan to provide a clear and strategic sense of how the Scottish Government is working to ensure a more sustainable future for the sector. How should the refreshed Culture Strategy Action Plan help to inform future budgetary decisions within the culture sector?

Under Q3 of the committee's call for views, we asked culture sector stakeholders the following questions:

- If standstill funding for culture persists, there will become a requirement for further cuts in investment (such as Creative Scotland reducing the size of its regularly

funded portfolio). In this case, where should funding be prioritised and how should these decisions be made?

- What should the culture sector be asking of the Scottish Government in the run-up to the next budget?

BB-DCA: The built infrastructure and building based organisations have to be a priority when they form such key parts of towns and cities. Alongside this, a geographic spread of course. But this has to be about impact, at all levels. Who is really delivering?

To match their vocal support for culture with funding. To better understand the impact we have. To ask us to work cross-sectorally to assist with other areas of policy and public delivery. To view us as a long-term investment not a drain on resources.

ML-SBT: Creative Scotland warn that while they currently support 120 RFOs, this may drop to 60 in the 2024/6 period, unless the Scottish Government reviews how it supports the arts. A 50 percent reduction in this cultural capacity would not represent a successful strategic outcome. This would involve CS in making a series of almost impossible choices.

Transparency in the decision-making process would need to flow from an overall Cultural Strategy that identifies key areas for services, and the nature of cultural activity it seeks to prioritise. However, the idea that one could make complete logical sense out of such a process of reduction is optimistic.

Match public rhetoric on the importance of the arts for Scotland with long-term ringfenced funding that takes into account inflation and so on. E.G. Make a proper commitment to supporting the arts. Cultural and artistic services to Scotland cannot develop and improve under a condition of seriously declining budgets.

Scotland has one of the lowest levels of investment in culture in Europe. Although the figures are difficult to disaggregate from those for the UK as a whole, it is fair to say that around 25 European nations invest more. To give a concrete example, the city of Berlin (population 3.6m) receives more culture funding than the entirety of Scotland.

PA-SSP: As they say in the old joke, I wouldn't start from here if I were you. Funding decisions in the here and now should be predicated on a forward and total vision to which artists themselves are SERIOUSLY invited to contribute. Or else there will be blood all over the carpet with only the sharp-elbowed (not necessarily the best people/artists) still standing. In theatre in particular, to pretend that the NTS is not part of this conversation is ludicrous. If the NTS needs to be re-designed (on the lines that were originally intended) then that is what should happen. The audience is what matters, here and internationally. No institutions should be exempt from a regional and national overhaul of provision...but an overhaul that is artist-led and audience-minded...

A commitment to the future. That we are going to come out of the other side of this with something that serves the audiences and the cultures better. A recognition that the

pandemic, which we pretended we could just "get better" from...has permanently changed the whole cultural landscape, and we need to take a new picture of it to find out where the hell we are now...and in the meantime, sustain those organisations who are prepared to face that future head-on. A great deal depends on it...not just the welfare of SSP members...

AMM-CoE: That's a Sophie's Choice I don't want to have to make!

Longer term commitments

GH-SADA: Focus on equality of outcome, support organisations that enable activity fight against political ego and vanity to ensure that arts and culture has the broadest impact across Scotland.

I would like to reverse this and suggest that the culture sector needs to be articulating a clear vision for the future of the sector that is something the Scottish Government wants to invest in.

AO-DW: A transparent and inclusive process of planning for the poorer UK context is needed. This may avoid the process of arrangements being commandeered by those that should loudest, and it could offer some democratic accountability.

A cultural policy commitment that could then be translated into a revised cultural strategy and investment plan.

SL-CETL: I don't think I can or should comment on that except to say that there are many statements saying culture is for everyone - that's a sweeping statement! We need to drill down and make sure that we are really actioning that. So culture for those who can't afford it, for those who can't get to it, who are disabled, who are learning disabled, who are deaf, who are blind etc etc. How are we ensuring that those people can access culture as audience members, participants and professionals and how are we catering for them?

More involvement, more practical outworking of policies, cross party cultural groups who ensure that statements and policies are actually happening. The setting up of a group of artists who advise the Government at grass roots level

JB-A: As stated before a reductive way of thinking is unhelpful in making these kinds of decisions. Through this type of approach realistically larger organisations which are part of the national cultural infrastructure are protected and smaller more dispensable ones dropped. In fact both are important in a healthy national cultural infrastructure and the approach needs to be around maximising opportunities for investment. This is possible but as stated before needs a deeper practical understanding of the impacts of culture across sectors and a more informed view of its relational benefits.

PT-SLIC: Health and Wellbeing

Economic Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

Clear funding routes

Codesign and collaboration to delivery of cultural activity
Sustainable infrastructure for the sector - what does that look like - with bias, I would add
build activity around the Scotland wide public library network etc

DM-CL: To better fund local cultural creativity, by supporting communities to create stronger connections that can deliver increased participation in creative cultural activity, which benefits both the individuals taking part and wider society.

To deliver funding that recognising creative cultural activity improves social connectedness and to open more public spaces for creative cultural activity.

LM-SSP: Funding could/should be prioritised towards actual productions, and away from supporting buildings. The existence of top-heavy staffing in theatre organisations should be interrogated rigorously to ensure that funding is not devoted to admin instead of actual work: what is the point in having an empty, over-staffed theatre building with no plays in it?

Invest in the Arts, and put proper fiscal evaluation in place to monitor return on investment. Don't just invest in monuments and buildings. Invest in portable companies and — most specifically — in people.

We need better models for funding to land in the pockets of freelance workers to create work and connect with audiences via non-traditional routes. We're not all attached to physical spaces or companies where programming agendas are often foregone conclusions, with decisions made several years into the future. We need work today.

JP-SA: Funding should be prioritised for smaller organisations who are not able to attract large grants or commercial sponsorship.

A recognition that culture is not an afterthought or an add-on. It is intrinsic to the functioning and wellbeing of society and can be harnessed to help alleviate and mitigate problems, particularly those experienced by the least well-off. Social prescribing is a cost-effective way of both reducing costs and improving health outcomes.

JK – LAS Our members raised a wide range of beneficial funding priorities. Overall, they wished to highlight the cultural and economic benefits of Arts investment. Members would like to see a consistent and robust funding model which supports writers and arts workers as valuable professionals as well as enabling audience access.

Anonymous responses:

REMOVED Any funding that does not include making transformational change could be described (almost literally!) as 'fiddling while Scotland burns'. In our view priority should be given to cultural organisations that demonstrate their clear understanding of how the climate emergency impacts on them and their concrete plans to "act in the way that is most sustainable" (Climate Change Act 2010) and to contribute to societal transformational change that enables the nation to live well in a climate-changed world.

REMOVED would like to see that the SG understands the potential of the wide role of culture in society and avoids pigeon-holing it as a sector that simply produces esoteric artistic work for art's sake; and that based on this potential, cross-portfolio funds are established for projects involving cultural practitioners and organisations that help deliver multi-policy or cross-policy objectives.

More money. The arts and culture bring in tourism and have a much wider economic impact.

Again these are questions to be answered by informed professionals with a significant amount of comparative data and resource at hand. Sensible planning given real conditions and in comparison to two or three nations of a similar foot print and population. A sense that culture is important. A plan to develop culture in a meaningful way.

projects should focus on working with young people or people with mental health issues, social prescribing should feature more.

don't underestimate the power of the arts.

SG should align its funding plans with decisions and priorities outlined in the cultural plan. With funds allocated to those that have the most significant impact on the cultural development of Scotland.

How will the funds in light of this empower emerging talent and enable underrepresented voices promote cultural exchange and engage diverse communities?

Have you looked at other European countries and how they support the arts. Look to France which recognises the cultural sector and an important aspect of national identity, social cohesion and economic growth.

By engaging with the sector in a meaningful way and sharing information more transparently about the decision making however difficult that is, and outing once and for all the tensions about geographical spread of the money

Plus some meaningful recognition and advocacy of culture finally moving it away from the 'nice to have' camp..... exacerbated by changing Ministers and lack of continuity, background, or understanding"

There needs to be very close discussion and decision making with local authorities and other key cultural providers and supporters - and around impacts of investment / evidence to date

For no reduction - and for greater vision to the pathways that might better explore and learn, to support the sector

The just should not happen. We should not hope make it imaginable.

Increase Scottish Government budget spend on culture to 1% as a minimum. Culture is a rare policy area that speaks BOTH to residents (tax payers) AND visitors.

Maintain the outstanding cultural organisations and ensure that they are genuinely accessible and inclusive. Prioritise exceptional artistic work as well as ways to share in it. Emphasising one of these elements at the expense of the other leads to a diminishing of impact and eventual atrophy of the art form, its practitioners and its audiences.

I think it is important to maintain a healthy infrastructure that will enable artists to access and progress along career paths at any stage of career or interest e.g. affordable studio, / rehearsal space and work and making spaces, access to training and professional development at all career stages, opportunities to present and see work, access to learning and arts education from early years onwards.

Further cuts would reduce the number of opportunities for employment, artistic creation, learning and teaching, and voices promoting experimentation and challenge, will diminish significantly .

An increase in funding to bring us closer to other European countries where the arts has traditionally been seen as an important area for investment. Defining ourselves in European contexts would be a positive development as it provides an outward-looking perspective. Any increase would still be small within the overall government spend, but would have a significant impact on the ground.

A plan for activating the cross sector/portfolio working and ideally some ring-fenced investment within these for arts and culture.

Make it easier for small arts businesses and sole traders to work and sell internationally. Set up inward and outward trade and culture visits to support this, involving sole traders and freelancers. We have seen that connections made through these routes have a long legacy in terms of economic impact, but also for Brand Scotland and cultural diplomacy. The arts sector can do this really well, and very cost-effectively.

Appendix 2 - Evidence

Arts and culture touch the lives of almost everyone in Scotland. It contributes to the economy in and of itself as well as bringing benefits to a range of sectors. Culture contributes to health and wellbeing, education, Scotland's identity, and reputation at home and abroad. Perhaps most importantly, culture creates connection and belonging.

Included here is recent evidence and research demonstrating the wide-ranging impact of Scotland's cultural sector, as well as a range of sources of understanding of its makeup.

Further evidence can be found on the Culture Counts Useful Facts resource, which is available here: [Useful Facts — Culture Counts](#)

Title | Organisation | Date | Topic Area

Big Freelancer Survey | Freelancers Make Theatre Work | July 2023| Freelance Workforce

- Overall, average earnings for freelancers in the industry are 17.5% below the UK national average salary
- Financial uncertainty and underpayment were the most widely reported concerns across all career stages, regions, and sectors.

[Big Freelancer Survey 2023 - Report - Freelancers make theatre work](#)

Economic Impact of the Edinburgh Festivals | Festivals Edinburgh | June 2023 | Economic Impact

- For every £1 invested by the public sector in the Edinburgh Festivals, there is a return of c£33 to Scotland.

[Edinburgh Festivals Impact Study digital original.pdf \(edinburghfestivalcity.com\)](#)

Arts and Creative Industries – What We Already Know | National Advisory Council on Women and Girls | Oct 2021 | Gender Equality Assessment

- In the Creative Industries, women account for around one third of the workforce and 60% of part-time positions.
- 42% of men working in the sector are in Professional Occupations, compared with 25% of women. Around two-thirds of senior managerial positions are held by men and two-thirds of the Administrative / Secretarial positions are held by women.

[Arts and Creative Industries – What we already know - NACWG \(generationequal.scot\)](#)

Trends in Funding for Culture | Scottish Parliament Information Centre | June 2023 | Public funding analysis

- ignoring emergency covid funding, the total grant funding for Creative Scotland in 2021-22 was about 10% lower in real terms than in 2014-15. This is despite the Scottish Government providing additional money for Screen Scotland since 2018-19. Therefore, the real terms cuts to the areas of Creative Scotland since 2014-15, that are not screen related, will be substantially more than 10%.

[Trends in Funding for Culture – SPICe Spotlight | Solas air SPICe \(spice-spotlight.scot\)](#)

The experience of being a freelancer in the Scottish literature, languages and publishing sector | Literature Alliance Scotland | Feb 2023 | Workforce Analysis

- 11% of the freelancers felt that they were always paid fairly when working as a freelancer in the sector

[LAS-FREELANCE-REPORT.pdf \(literaturealliancescotland.co.uk\)](#)

Cultural Participation Monitor | The Audience Agency | Oct 2020 – July 2023 | Longitudinal participation survey

- The numbers of people already attending less arts and culture than they were a year ago has gone up significantly, from 31% in February 2023, to 42% in July, though the change is slower in younger groups.

[Recent Key Insights | The Audience Agency](#)

Review of Fair Work in the creative and cultural sectors in Scotland | Creative Scotland | May 2022 | Policy review

- the biggest challenge for employers in delivering Fair Work now is the UK economy. The need to increase salaries and fees relative to the cost of living to resolve low pay and precarious work raises a fundamental question - “How is this to be resourced?”.

[Review of Fair Work in the creative and cultural sectors in Scotland | Creative Scotland](#)

Audience Intentions Survey: Impacts of rising costs of living | Creative Scotland | August 2020 – April 2023

- 50% have cut back on expenditure on arts & culture due to costs.

[Creative Scotland Audience Intentions Survey: Impacts of rising costs of living | Creative Scotland](#)

The Good Work Review | Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre | February 2023 | Workforce review

- Job quality for Creative freelancers is a particular concern. Self-employed Creative workers report considerable autonomy and control over their working hours and job satisfaction is high. But hours can be extremely long, unpaid work and pay dissatisfaction is high, investment in professional development low and mechanisms to enable worker voice more limited.

[Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | The Good Work Review \(pec.ac.uk\)](#)

Unseen Unheard | Attitude is Everything and Black lives Matter | June 2023 | Race and Disability in the UK Music Industry

- 80% of Black disabled music creators and 89% of Black disabled music professionals felt they had faced some form of discrimination in the music industry.

[Attitude is Everything and Black Lives in Music release Unseen Unheard report and podcast - Attitude is Everything](#)

Hold On. Diversity and Managing in the Arts | Inc Arts UK and the Bridge Group | November 2020 | Study of diversity in arts management

- When asked about how to improve diversity in arts management, respondents highlight the need for representative staff and clear, transparent recruitment/progression processes. There needs to be investment in reducing barriers. Respondents recommend that diverse voices should be involved at every stage in project delivery.

[Hold On. Diversity and Managing in the Arts - CultureHive](#)

Creative Recovery? The Role of Cultural Policy in Shaping Post-COVID Urban Futures | World Cities Culture Forum & Kings College London | July 2023| Investigation of urban policymakers' interventions on city cultural life and possibilities for the future

- To creatively imagine and develop post-COVID urban futures, policymakers need to extend 'time horizons' beyond crisis management and the short-termism of the typical policy cycle.

[Creative Recovery? The Role of Cultural Policy in Shaping Post-COVID Urban Futures](#)

The Disappearing Act - Scottish Producing Theatre Report | Data Culture Change and Scotland's Leading Producing Theatres | July 2023 | Sectoral Analysis

- From 2017-2020 the six commissioning theatres' collective average annual ticket sales totalled 423,000 and their collective turnover topped £20 million. Over the same period, they collectively staged an average of 106 productions a year, of which 80% were commissioned and other new work.
- The six theatres collectively posted an annual trading deficit in three of the five years of the study. This was partially due to increasing aggregate annual building costs which reached over £610,000 in 2020/21.

[SPT Report | Data Culture Change](#)

The Impact of Arts on Population Health | University College London Social Biobehavioural Research Group | July 2023 | Long-term impact analysis of arts on population health

- Engagement with arts and culture is linked to a long and healthy life. These include more positive health and social behaviours in children and young people, better mental health in adulthood, lower risks of depression and dementia in later life and lower levels of chronic pain and fragility and even longer lives.

[New report by UCL researchers links participating in arts and culture to longer, healthier lives - SBRG \(sbbresearch.org\)](#)

The Civic Role of Arts Organisations Learning Report: From Inquiry to Movement | Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation | June 2023 | Impact analysis

- There is strong evidence of a growing movement with common practices and principles. More people and networks are making the case for civic arts practice and for the investment and policy framework that makes it possible.

[The Civic Role of Arts Organisations Learning Report: From Inquiry to Movement - Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation — UK Branch](#)

National Evaluation of the Culture Collective programme | Creative Scotland | March 2023 | Impact analysis

- It is clear that the unique, flexible, and long term support offered by the Programme has enabled the projects to make their work responsive to their place, with more meaningful community-centred engagement.

[National Evaluation of the Culture Collective programme | Creative Scotland](#)

The networked shift: A creative industries foresight study | Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre | April 2023 | Foresight Study

- The means to create and distribute creative content has been democratised by digital tools, platforms, and Internet connectivity – however the creative industries are not yet representative of the UK population. This contradiction creates a possible future sticking point not just for workforce growth, but for market reach and future propensity to innovate.

[Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre | The networked shift: A... \(pec.ac.uk\)](#)

The Effects of Covid on the Scottish Traditional Arts | Creative Scotland | 2023 | Impact Analysis

- The worst financial impact of the pandemic was on freelancers in Scottish traditional arts. The average income across the sector is between £5,000 and £10,000, with 87% of respondents earning less than £20,000 pre-pandemic per annum from Scottish traditional arts, underscoring the importance of part-time and seasonal work in Scottish traditional arts. When asked how this income has been affected by the pandemic, 63% said their income had been either 'reduced somewhat' or 'been badly reduced' with 18% saying their income had 'totally disappeared'.

[The Effects of Covid on the Scottish Traditional Arts Report | Creative Scotland](#)

Mapping Ecologies of Care in Creative Hubs During Covid-19 | University of Stirling | May 2023 | Impact analysis

- In response to the challenges during the early days of the pandemic, local community organisations, including cultural and creative hubs, were shown play a vital role in supporting people in local communities, collecting and re-distributing resources, information sharing, coordinating responses and connecting with the isolated. Creative workers and hubs redirected their efforts during the pandemic and along with that came an intensification of practices of care at various scales.

[New research finds cultural creative hubs key to supporting local communities during crises | About | University of Stirling](#)

Evaluation of Creative Scotland COVID-19 Emergency Funding Programmes | Creative Scotland | August 2022 and May 2023 | Impact analysis

- There is also strong evidence to demonstrate that the funds prevented the loss of jobs in the sector – 82% of the organisations surveyed said that the funds had prevented job losses, although the furlough scheme has clearly also been critical. Even so, we found evidence of some job losses (c 154 FTEs within our sample).

[Evaluation of Creative Scotland COVID-19 Emergency Funding Programmes | Creative Scotland](#)

Scottish Household Survey 2021 | Scottish Government | April 2023 | Population Survey

- 2021 data shows that 89% of adults had been culturally engaged in the last year, either by attending a cultural event or place of culture or participating in a cultural activity

[Scottish Household Survey 2021 - telephone survey: key findings - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

Growth sector statistics | Scottish Government | August 2023 | Economic Data

- Median weekly full time earnings across the Scottish Creative Industries growth sector stood at £623.4 in 2022, which was lower than the Scottish average at £640.5.

[Growth sector statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)

The Playwrights' Studio Scotland/Scottish Society of Playwrights | Bi-annual Playwrights Survey

- The Playwrights' Studio Scotland/Scottish Society of Playwrights conducts a bi-annual survey of playwrights in Scotland, which provides a snapshot of playwrights' earnings, conditions and opinions. The latest survey took place in 20/21. A copy of the results can be supplied on demand: email scottishsocietyofplaywrights@gmail.com

WHY ARCHIVES & RECORDS MATTER Supporting communities, wellbeing, economic recovery and a fairer society A Manifesto for Local Government | Scottish Council on Archives | February 2022 | Manifesto

- Archives attract visitors from all over the world who are tracing their family history. Ancestral tourism is already worth over £100m a year to the Scottish economy and has the potential to grow significantly

[WHY-ARCHIVES-AND-RECORDS-MATTER-A-MANIFESTO-FOR-LOCAL-GOVERNMENT.pdf \(scottisharchives.org.uk\)](#)

Big Conversation 2022 results | Creative Lives | 2022 | Participation Survey

- A majority of volunteer-led creative groups are struggling with increased costs, although around half are also doing something to help their communities with these difficulties, e.g. providing warm spaces, free hot drinks and waiving costs.
- Despite the increased cost of living and the lingering effects of the pandemic, optimism about the future of voluntary creative activity is now at the highest level since 2017.

[Big Conversation 2022 results | Creative Lives \(creative-lives.org\)](#)

FORWARD - Scotland's Public Library Strategy 2021-2025 | Scottish Library and Information Council | 2021 | Strategy

- COVID-19 has shown how resilient libraries can be in delivering their services in new ways. There is an opportunity to review and adapt 'normal' pre-COVID practices and perhaps do things differently - in conjunction with communities and their needs.

[Forward: Scotland's Public Library Strategy \(scottishlibraries.org\)](#)

Evaluating real change in the real world: Creativity, connection and the unseen as felt evidence in 'Aspiring Communities' | Social Marketing Principles and Practice for Delivering Global Change | April 2023 | Academic Research

- With austerity, comes increased accountability. Prove best value for money. Evidence how interventions improve outcomes. Measure how "our most deprived and fragile communities" co-produce sustainable "local solutions that address local priorities and needs, increase active inclusion and build on the assets of local communities to reduce poverty and to enable inclusive growth".

[Evaluating real change in the real world: Creativity, connection and the unseen as felt evidence in 'Aspiring Communities' — University of Edinburgh Research Explorer](#)